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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Economic Information: Impending Food Crisis, Tsingtao

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SUPPLEMENT 1

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1. Overshadowing other problems now confronting Tsingtao's municipal authorities is that of providing food for an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 refugees from Communist-held areas. UNRRA and CNRRA are unable to guarantee food shipments to Shantung after 20 February because of the uncertainty of distribution schedules resulting from UNRRA's inactivation program. On 8 February a private firm received half a month's food supply, which will be pooled with the UNRRA stocks to supply the refugees until some time in early March, when all stocks will have been exhausted.

2. The problem has been heightened by the influx of additional refugees since the reopening of the Chiaoohi (Tsingtao-Tsinan) Railroad in December. Contrary to the Municipal Government's hopes that the railroad would provide a means whereby the refugees could return to their homes, the reverse has occurred. The refugee population has increased by approximately 10,000, and it continues to grow with the arrival of each train.

3. To combat this emergency situation the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Municipal Government has taken the following steps:

a. It has sent to the Central Government a telegram describing the situation and requesting immediate aid in the form of 30,000 tons of food, which is sufficient to meet Shantung's relief food needs for one year according to the Bureau's estimate. (note: this amount would be enough for refugees in Nationalist-controlled areas of Shantung for one year.)

b. It has launched a survey to determine which refugees no longer require relief because of having become self-sufficient. Mayor LI estimates that approximately one-third of the refugees could be eliminated from relief rolls in this manner.

c. It has recommended to the City Council the levying of an amusement tax to help finance the projects described in a. and b.

d. The Bureau has appointed a traveling purchasing group to locate, procure, and ship foodstuffs to Shantung.

4. Mayor LI's outlook on the situation is pessimistic. He considers the local government incapable of forestalling the disorder and possible riots which will almost certainly accompany the food shortage. For this reason the matter has not been made public. (note: The mayor's request for Central Government aid was subsequently reported in a Shanghai paper on or about 20 February.)

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